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Integration and Alienation of Nature in the Space Conception of Ancient Greek and Roman Sanctuaries

This presentation will revisit the issue of spatial organization of Greek and Roman sanctuaries by relating their planning to two different attitudes towards nature in classical antiquity. An earlier attitude is a result of the mythological tradition, in which the boundary between Gods and man are blurred. Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi, located at a site endowed with mythological significance, illustrates this attitude best. In this sanctuary, myth, nature and the man-made merge by way of an organizational logic that can be explained through cinematic concepts such as frames, sequence and montage. A later attitude towards nature is a result of the philosophical tradition, in which man separates himself from the almighty Gods and defines himself as the constructor of his own order through democratization of the polis. As a result of this separation, man starts creating his own controlled space outside the realm of the nature. Sanctuary of Athena in Lindos or the Sanctuary of Fortuna and Praeneste illustrate how concepts driven from perspective becomes instrumental in shaping space as an axial construct and creating an interior that is abstracted from its natural environment.

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